

# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

**TITLE Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: special measures update**

**DATE 8 December, 2015**

**BY Vaughan Gething AM, Deputy Minister for Health**

A meeting of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board today agreed the outcome of a public consultation into proposals for temporary changes to women’s and maternity services and discussed the outline business case for the sub regional neonatal intensive care centre (SuRNICC).

These two issues – resolving the outstanding question about the future of consultant-led maternity services at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and bringing forward plans for the SuRNICC – were among the areas for action highlighted when the health board was put into special measures in June.

Welsh Ministers took clear and decisive action, acting on the recommendation of the tripartite group of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, the Wales Audit Office and senior Welsh Government officials to place Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in special measures in June.

Following this intervention, I am pleased that we are seeing real progress in these two areas. The decisions taken at the board meeting today have been underpinned by the commitment and hard work of health board staff in the interest and safety of mothers and babies in North Wales.

They have worked to manage clinical risks and have successfully recruited extra midwives and seven new consultants to stabilise the workforce and ensure the safety of the units – during – and beyond – the consultation. At the same time they have developed the SuRNICC outline business which will now be submitted for Welsh Government scrutiny and approval.

The Welsh Government has been clear on its support and commitment to the SuRNICC to meet the needs of very sick and premature babies in North Wales – we have recently announced £1.4m to help develop the plans - and a recruitment process is underway.

The community health council has been positive in its feedback about the consultation on the proposals for temporary changes to women’s and maternity services. It said that it was satisfied it had been meaningfully involved and it had been informed by best practice and current guidance.

It has been important to give people certainty about the temporary options for women’s and maternity services in North Wales. The approval of the recommendations by the board gives the public, staff, pregnant women and patients’ certainty for the immediate future.

However, I expect the health board to continue to engage and consult with its staff and the public about its plans as they develop.

Another key aspect of special measures is for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to begin the process of reconnecting with the public in North Wales and regaining the public’s confidence. The health board was instructed to undertake a listening and engagement exercise – this started during the summer and has coincided with the consultation about proposals for temporary changes to maternity and women’s services.

This consultation will underpin the longer-term work the health board needs to undertake to re-connect with staff and the public. To support this I have agreed additional resources, as part of the special measures improvement team, to enable Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to build on both the consultation and the listening and engagement exercise with staff, stakeholder groups and the public.

This work is integral to the future planning of health and health services in the region and for good quality and effective services across all sites and settings.

I have also agreed additional support for the work needed to develop the future strategy and service plans for health services in North Wales, as part of the development of a three-year integrated medium-term plan. This will initially involve a rapid scoping exercise to ensure the support under special measures is targeted in the right areas to ensure planning expectations are met.

The recruitment process for the new substantive chief executive is well underway, and interviews will take place later this month.

The health board still faces challenges and further actions and support will be needed over the course of the next two years. Welsh Ministers and the Welsh Government will continue to support the staff and the board to make the necessary improvements and continue to provide high-quality care.